

2. CLAIM AMENDMENT

Claim listing:

Please amend the claims as set forth in the following listing. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims for the present application:

1. (Original) A method for producing an elastic nonwoven fabric, comprising:
incrementally stretching a nonwoven web in at least one direction to activate the elastic properties of the nonwoven web and to form the elastic nonwoven fabric,
wherein the nonwoven web comprises a plurality of multicomponent strands having first and second polymer components longitudinally coextensive along the length of the strands, said first component comprising an elastomeric polymer, and said second polymer component comprising a polymer less elastic than the first polymer component.
2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the nonwoven web is formed by:
melt spinning a plurality of multicomponent strands having first and second polymer components longitudinally coextensive along the length of the strands, said first component comprising an elastomeric polymer, and said second polymer component comprising a non-elastomeric polymer;
forming the multicomponent strands into a nonwoven web; and
bonding or intertwining the strands to form a coherent bonded nonwoven web.
3. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of incrementally stretching the web comprises stretching the fabric so that portions of the multicomponent strands are stretch-activated and become elastic, while other portions of the strands are not stretch-activated and are substantially less elastic.
4. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the incrementally stretching the web comprises stretching the fabric so that substantially all of the multicomponent strands are stretch-activated and become elastic.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the incrementally stretching the web comprises incrementally stretching the web in both the machine direction and in the cross-machine direction.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the incrementally stretching the web comprises directing the web through at least one pair of interdigitating stretching rollers.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 5, wherein the directing the web through interdigitating stretching rollers includes forming narrow, spaced apart longitudinally extending stretch-activated elastic zones in the fabric, separated by intervening longitudinally extending non-activated zones that are substantially less elastic.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the incrementally stretching the web comprises directing the web through a first pair of interdigitating stretching rollers to stretch activate at a first portion of the web and subsequently directing the web through a second pair of interdigitating stretching rollers to stretch activate a second portion of the non-activated strands within the web.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled)

11. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the first polymer component comprises an elastomeric polyurethane, elastomeric polyethylene, elastomeric polypropylene or blends thereof, and the second polymer component comprises a polyolefin that is less elastic than the elastomeric polyurethane.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 10 wherein the second polymer component is polypropylene, polyethylene, or a blend thereof.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the multicomponent strands has a sheath/core configuration.

17. (Canceled)

Claims 18-27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently amended) A garment comprising a plurality of layers, wherein at least one of said layers comprises the nonwoven fabric made using the process of claim 16.

29. (Original) The garment according to claim 28 wherein the garment is a training pant, a diaper, an absorbent underpant, an incontinence product, a feminine hygiene item, an industrial apparel, a coverall, a head covering, a pant, a shirt, a glove, a sock, a surgical gown, a surgical drape, a face mask, a surgical cap, a surgical hood, a shoe covering, or a boot slipper.

Claims 30. (Canceled)